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TREATING INTESTINAL PARASITES

PARASITES IN ANIMALS ARE A SEVERE HEALTH HAZARD TO PEOPLE:

Thousands of people become infected in the United States every year by ingestion of fecal material from contaminated soil, their hands (usually under the fingernails) or from other objects. Domestic, wild and feral animals can all spread disease to people. Children, the elderly and the immunocompromised are especially vulnerable to infection.

PARASITIC SYMPTOMS IN HUMANS:

Giardia: Diarrhea, gas, abdominal pain, nausea, anorexia, greasy stool, dehydration and chronic soft stool.

Roundworms: Visceral Larva Migrans can cause an enlarged liver, intermittent fever, weight loss, anorexia, coughing asthma, pneumonia. Ocular Larva Migrans can cause vision loss and blindness.

Hookworms: Anemia, abdominal pain, diarrhea, anorexia, lethargy, respiratory difficulty, cardiac enlargement, irregular heart rate, weight loss, protein and iron deficiency, stunted growth and mental retardation in children and occasional death. Cutaneous Larva Migrans can cause skin lesions, purities (itchiness), inflammation and pain. Eosinophilic Enteritis can cause severe abdominal inflammation and pain.

Tapeworms: Visceral Larva Migrans can cause an enlarged liver, intermittent fever, weight loss, anorexia, coughing, respiratory difficulty and pneumonia. Hydatid disease with tapeworm cysts in the liver and lungs. Abdominal pain, diarrhea, anal purities (itching), Vitamin B12 deficiency, anemia hives and painful nodules.

Toxoplasmosis: Fever, swollen lymph nodes, muscle and joint pain, abdominal pain secondary to liver and splenic enlargement, abortion, stillbirth, children infected in utero may suffer blindness, neurological conditions, hydrocephalus, microcephalus and mental retardation.

Whipworms: Anemia, abdominal pain, diarrhea, anorexia, lethargy, respiratory difficulty, cardiac enlargement, irregular heart rate, weight loss, protein, vitamin A and iron deficiency, stunted growth and mental retardation in children and occasional death. Rectal prolapsed from straining. Eosinophilic Enteritis can cause severe abdominal inflammation and pain.

Consider these suggestions when treating and/or preventing parasites in animals:

TREAT THE ENVIRONMENT:

- ✓ Floors in kennels and dog runs should be impervious, so they are easier to clean.
- ✓ All fecal material should be removed prior to cleaning as organic material will decrease the effectiveness of cleaning solutions. A 5 - 10% bleach solution (1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water) can be sprayed or mopped in an infested area but may cause irritation to human skin and eyes.
- ✓ Feces in yards should be picked up on a daily basis.
- ✓ Mice and other rodents can serve as transport hosts so pest control is important. Rodent poisons are poisons for dogs, cats, and other animals as well. We do not recommend using these products but if you do then follow the manufacturer's recommendations and prevent access by your pets.

TREAT THE ANIMAL:

- ✓ Infected animals should be kept separate from other animals until cleared.
- ✓ To reduce the possibility that at-risk females will infect their puppies, they should be placed on a special deworming program during pregnancy and/or lactation. They should also be dewormed at the same time as the puppies.
- ✓ Fecal centrifugation tests should be performed two to four times during the first year of life for average animals and more often if an animal is repeatedly positive.
- ✓ Fecal centrifugation tests on adults should be performed at least one to two times per year.
- ✓ Fecal centrifugation tests should be performed on females before they are bred.
- ✓ Monthly preventives treat or control intestinal parasites and are an important addition to parasite transmission. The use of a monthly preventative is highly recommended for all animals.

SAFEGUARD HUMAN HEALTH:

- ✓ Good hygiene is extremely important in parasite prevention. Hand washing is easy and extremely effective at preventing parasite transmission. Do not let children play in areas where dogs or cats may have defecated.
- ✓ Persons who will have contact with the ground should place an impervious material between themselves and the ground and wear gloves. When walking outside wear shoes.
- ✓ Sunbathers, especially those lying on wet sand or ground may also be at an increased risk of becoming infected. Animals should not be allowed to defecate on beaches and people should not walk barefoot through the sand.
- ✓ Prevent contamination when preparing meals. Do not consume raw or undercooked meat. Wash vegetables and fruit. Do not drink untreated water or unpasteurized milk.